

JAMES. (*Yelling at them.*) What's the matter with you? Are you crazy? This is a private home!

PETER. Who are they? Street toughs?

JULIA. It's the cast of *Matilda*.

JAMES. Now can we please go downstairs and eat? (*Frank enters. He is draped in a black shroud.*)

PETER. There he is! My genius director. We all see you under there. Your famous Japanese Noh theatre techniques aren't working, Sir Frank!

START FRANK. Who is James Franco and why is he sexting me?

VIRGINIA. James Franco sexts everyone.

JAMES. He thinks he's invisible under that?

JULIA. He sat like that for days in rehearsal. Brilliant. After a while it was like he actually wasn't there.

PETER. I'm difficult to work with and you're close to impossible. It's a marriage made in heaven and I'm sending you my next play. (*He pulls the shroud off Frank and hugs him.*)

FRANK. If one more person tells me I'm a genius, I'll punch them, Julia!

JULIA. But you *are* a genius, darling, that's why we hired you.

FRANK. You hired me because I always get good reviews.

JAMES. That's a pretty good reason.

FRANK. I don't know what I'm doing but you wait and see: I'll win a Tony for this.

JULIA. I certainly hope so.

FRANK. I've had fourteen hits in a row in London, I've won twelve Olivier and four Evening Standard awards. I want a flop. I need a flop. Somebody, tell me: When is it my turn to fail? I can't go on like this — the critics' darling.

JULIA. Try to hold on just one more night.

FRANK. I am in despair, people. The emperor isn't wearing any clothes! I'm a fake. My work is a fake. I make this shit up as I go along. I don't know what I'm doing half the time and when I do, it terrifies me it's so bad. I'm no good. You've got to believe me, I'm no good.

JAMES. I believe you. Can we go down now, Julia?

JULIA. We can't leave him like this.

FRANK. The only flops I've ever had were at drama school. Nobody liked my production of anything. My space-age *Oedipus Rex*. My spoken *La bohème*. My gay *Waiting for Godot*. But what got me expelled was my *Titus Andronicus*. I did the whole thing in mime. No dialogue. No poetry. No Shakespeare.

VIRGINIA. What did it have?

FRANK. Blood bags. Every time somebody walked on stage: splat! They got hit with a big blood bag. God, it was gross.

VIRGINIA. It sounds fantastic.

FRANK. It was terrible. But at least everyone said it was terrible. I'm pulling the same stunts in New York and everybody says it's brilliant.

VIRGINIA. It is brilliant.

FRANK. I hate it! God I miss RADA.

JULIA. *(Always helpful.)* The Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts.

JAMES. I'm sure RADA misses you. Does anybody remember what food tastes like? Julia, I'll die if I don't eat something.

FRANK. *(Emptying his pockets.)* I don't want these things. Please don't leave them around.

JULIA. Sir Frank, that's my sterling silver pepper shaker. My priceless bud vase. Little Elliot's bronzed baby shoes! *(Everyone is amazed at the size and diversity of Frank's haul.)*

JAMES. You don't happen to have a sandwich in there, do you?

JULIA. *(Reading an engraving.)* "To Mildred Sturgeon from Mandy Patinkin." Who's Mildred Sturgeon?

FRANK. My therapist. She's supposed to be helping me! You know what she tells me? "Put it back, Frank."

JULIA. She's right! Put it back, Frank.

FRANK. Three hundred dollars an hour and that's all I get? "Put it back, Frank!" I want to know why I pick it up in the first place.

VIRGINIA. You shouldn't be alone tonight, baby.

PETER. None of us should. We'll order up, James. Here we go, people! Everybody, shush! *(Peter quickly turns up the sound on the muted television.)*

TV ANNOUNCER. In breaking news: A Roosevelt Island cable car packed with school children plunged into the East River —

PETER. False alarm. *(Mutes TV again.)*

JAMES. Gus, we're all starving. See what you can rustle up for us down there, will you?

GUS. Sure thing, petal. *(He goes.)*

PETER. This looks more like it. *(Un-mutes the TV.)*

TV ANNOUNCER. Legendary singer/actress Barbra Streisand was found — *(Peter mutes the television and picks up a ringing phone.)*

JAMES. Something about Barbra!

PETER. *(Into the phone.)* Hello, Buzz. Thank God for that rave from New York One.

END